4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

346
775

departed ; although this Manjhisthan is build before the house of the headman of a village yet it seems that the spirits of all deceased villagers are commonly considered to congregate there.

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After death, the body is carried on a bedstead by the relatives and villagers who cover the body with a new shroud. When they reach a cross road some [782] parched rice and cotton seeds are scattered about as a charm against the malignant spirits that might throw obstacles in the way. On that cross road they wait for an hour and the women and relations lament over the deceased. They carry the dead body to the bank of a streamlet nearby. The clothes, brass utensils and weapons of the departed are brought with the dead body. These things are sold at half price near the [432] [768] pyre. The pyre is prepared with the wood which is brought from the jungle nearby. Before placing the dead body on the pyre, the heir of the deceased with his face averted and walking backwards inserts a piece of grass between the lips of the dead man and places a silver coin in his hand. The dead body with the bed-stead is placed on the funeral pyre and a small chip is taken off the collar-bone and deposited in a new pot and the heir then applies fire to the dead body by placing a piece of burning wood on the face of the corpse. Before setting fire to the body it is covered with a branch and four pieces of wood are put on it. A fowl is taken round the pyre thrice and is finally nailed to the south-west corner pole. After the heir has placed a piece of burning wood on the dead man's face, all the relatives and others present throw a log on the pyre and proceed to kindle it. The people sit at a

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

623
634
[627]

All petty disputes, both of a civil and criminal nature, are settled there but if the matter to be settled is of an immoral and shameful character, they go to the end of the village street or on some other convenient place where they need not fear to hurt the feelings of their womenkind.

428

Inheritance: In the matter of inheritance, the Santals follow their own customs and know nothing of the so-called codes which govern the devolution of property among the Hindus. Till the death of the father the property of the family remains intact and all the members enjoy in common. After his death the property is divided among his sons equally except that the eldest gets a bullock and a rupee more than the others. As the Santal women have no right to any of the property, movable and immovable, the question of inheritance on their part cannot arise at all. If a man dies without an issue his property goes to the nearest relation. If the father of the deceased remains alive the property will revert to the father; if he is dead it goes to the brothers of the deceased equally; if the latter are dead their sons succeed. In default of this the paternal uncles and their sons become successors. The condition of the widow of a childless man becomes very bad; none takes her charge. Sometimes she gets one cloth, a bati (brass vessel), a calf and 10 to 12 maunds of paddy. Sometimes also it can be seen that her husband's younger brothers keep her. Even when one of the younger brothers keeps her, the share of the deceased brother is equally divided between all the brothers. If the younger brothers of her husband do not give her any shelter she returns to her parents'

[562]

428
768

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

428 house. If a man leaves only daughters (unmarried) 768 their paternal grandfather or uncles take charge of them and of the widow and the property remains in their possession. They give to these girls the presents which they get during their marriage as their own property, but the bride-price goes to guardians, headman, etc. After marriage the widow gets the perquisites of a childless widow and returns to her father's or to her daughter's house. In many cases it can be seen that one of the sons-in-law becomes gharda-jawae. He lives with his wife in the father-in-laws house and helps him in every possible way like a son till he dies, when the gharda-jawae inherits all the immovable property and half the movable property ; the other half goes to the relatives of the deceased.

If a man dies leaving a widow and several sons (minor), then the widow keeps all the property in her possession. The grandfather or uncles of the sons see that the widow does not waste it. If the widow [587] remarries before her son's marriage the grandfather and [429] uncles take possession of the property The mother of the sons has no right to any part of it. Sometimes it can be seen that the widow gets a calf which is known as *Bhandkar*. If the widow does not marry again, she lives with her sons, generally with the youngest son. The youngest son then claims the property of his mother after her death. No other can claim it.

596 **Partition**: Partition in a Santal family generally takes place when members become numerous in a family, and a single house cannot accommodate all